ARCHBISHOP’S EASTER MESSAGE TO THE NATION, 2021

PREAMBLE
We send you greetings and goodwill messages during this Easter. It is the second time in a row that we are unable to celebrate the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ in the normal way. We condole with families that have lost their loved ones especially due to Corona virus. Our prayers are with the sick and the infected. May God grant you help and quick recovery. The virus has indeed caused great suffering to us all, disrupting lives and livelihoods. We encourage all to look up to God who is able to revive our hope and can turn-around our difficult circumstances. May we be encouraged by God’s assurance given to us in the words of Isaiah 41:10;

Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

We encourage you to put your hope in God who alone is in control of these hard times. In him, who brought back Jesus from death to life, we have hope that we too shall pass from death to life, and enjoy the abundant life God offers to all who follow him.

Taking cognizance of the suffering and hardship that face our people, we make the following observations and recommendations:

1.0 COVID-19
We commend the government’s effort in addressing the Covid-19 public health crisis but also recognize that the government’s effort has been tried and tested, and stretched to the limit. In this regard, we urge the government: -

I. To do everything within its power to secure vaccine and urgently rollout a comprehensive vaccination program throughout the country.

II. To review the current lockdown instituted in five counties and provide safety nets inform of relief programs or tax breaks to cushion the most vulnerable members of our society who are extremely distressed.

III. To ensure prudent appropriation of billions allocated to the Health sector and increase bed capacities in county and referral hospitals, urgently improve the supply and adequate availability of oxygen gas, increased uptake in testing, and ICU facilities.

IV. We urge our people to take personal responsibility and strictly adhere to all safety protocols and take advantage of available vaccination opportunities.
2.0 HIV & AIDS
We are very disturbed by reports of shortages of the life-saving Anti-Retroviral Drugs across the country. The 1.2 million people living with HIV are unable to receive enough doses for the duration of treatment that they have been receiving due to low stocks. We appeal to Government to:
I. Immediately facilitate the release and distribution of the ARVs to all the treatment centers in the country and
II. Allocate adequate funding in our budget to support the HIV and TB programs in Kenya.

3.0 The State of our Economy:
We note with great concern that the government is not doing enough to address the economic hardship that the ordinary Kenya is experiencing. The situation seems to be worsened by the huge wage bill and public debt, which is ever increasing, since 2013/2014 FY. It is upon our government to strengthen prudent management of public resources and to prioritize service to the citizens of this country and initiate programs that will alleviate suffering of the people. In view of the harsh economic realities against the backdrop of the current health crisis, we as the church, make the following appeals and recommendations:

I. The national government to develop a contingency plan to address a potential deepening of the economic shock. Left uncontrolled the rising public debt will have a domino effect. It is likely that, default by businesses and parastatals, increase in contingency liabilities on Publicly Guaranteed Debt, a surge in non-performing loans, missed tax revenue targets, the fall of the shilling against hard currencies, will undermine the government’s ability to render basic services.

II. Seek to lengthen maturities of large debts such as the Euro bonds and Chinese loans in order to limit refinancing risks.

III. Determine and maintain an optimal liquidity in terms of foreign reserves as buffer against volatility in the forex.

IV. Urgently put in place new and effective measures to cushion Kenyans from very high cost of living. As a starter, the cost of petrol and petrol products can be subsidized and tax breaks considered.

V. We also propose that the government initiates a national discourse on major issues that bedevil this country including economic performance, national cohesion, mismanagement and theft of public resources with a view to strengthen public accountability and individual responsibility.

VI. We urge the national and county governments to make changes in fiscal policy with a view to reducing the expenditure burden. It is time we be honest with ourselves and agree that we can reduce the size of government, restructure non-performing parastatals, streamline government bureaucracies and curb mismanagement, which continues to rob us of hard-earned resources. It is possible to save on what we have. Be innovative, as we can no longer rely on taxes alone from an already overburdened Kenyan taxpayer.
4.0 Family
We recognize that the harsh economic times and the covid-19 situation has continued to have adverse effects on families.

I. We encourage our people not to lose hope even as we appeal to the government to address our plight and ourselves be as charitable as we can be to one another – each looking out for their neighbors in need. Let the word of God dwell richly in your hearts as you stand and act in the power of the risen Christ.

II. We urge families to maintain personal as well as family responsibilities and not to give into fear, which easily leads to hopelessness and depression. As I said in the opening words, let God’s assurance that he is with us banish our fear and inspire us to spread hope that these difficult times shall pass too. In charity and forbearance, let each exercise their faith and help each other with whatever little is available.

III. We note that family values and morals have significantly been eroded and the depressing times have seen increased family breakdown, gender-based sexual violence, violation of child rights and general insecurity. We urge individuals and families to join support groups, seek counseling, and take up memberships in church fellowships.

5.0 Count down to 2022 National Elections
We are deeply concerned that the Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission (IEBC) is not adequately constituted to fully function. As 2022 draws near, we urge the government to facilitate adequate preparations for the election by putting in place required legislations and ensuring that the Commission has adequate human and other resources to deliver peaceful and fair elections.

6.0 Prayer
As a Church, we call for compassion and support for our brothers and sisters who are affected by the pandemic socially, emotionally, economically or spiritually and to offer prayer and support to the sick and their families. Continue praying for and supporting our frontline health workers who continue to serve sacrificially despite the risk of exposure they encounter every day. May the Lord bless them and protect them and their families. We appeal to Government and well-wishers to provide the health workers with all the PPEs that they need for their protection.

Finally, we invite you to join hands with us as we accompany one another in this very challenging season. The Lord’s message is clear to all of us. “Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will uphold you with My right right hand.” As we face the cross during this Easter, let us see beyond it and take hold of the hope of His resurrection. We shall overcome in the power of the risen Christ.

God bless you; God bless our Country.

[Signature]

The Most Rev. Dr. Jackson Ole Sapit
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